

5. Transportation

Introduction

The goal of this plan with respect to transportation is to

- **Enhance the transportation network to allow residents and visitors to travel around safely and efficiently by foot, bicycle, automobile and public transit**

Throughout this Neighborhood Planning process many concerns and issues related to the transportation network were expressed and identified by stakeholders in the area. The principal themes that encapsulate these concerns are

- ❖ **The transportation network should be safer for all users: autos, pedestrians, cyclists, etc**

The combined NPA, and each individual NPA, is surrounded by major roadways on which a huge number of automobiles pass through this part of town on a daily basis. These roads serve as principal routes to and from the airport in addition to downtown Austin. Cut-through traffic and speeding have been identified as major concerns of planning participants on many roads within the combined NPA. Several of the recommendations that came from planning participants attempt to address these issues.

- ❖ **Roadways should not be barriers and impede pedestrian and bicycle travel**

Several of the roads that bound and bisect this area are wide and contain numerous traffic lanes, which makes it very challenging for non-automobile users to safely and efficiently traverse from one part of the area to another. Coupled with insufficient pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, this creates problems and annoyances for those who would like to access services and local amenities on both sides of a roadway. A good example of such a barrier is Riverside Drive. The residents south of the road would like to have safe and easy access to Town Lake and the hike-and-bike trail and it is probable that many of the residents in the apartments to the north of Riverside Drive would like the same type of access to the businesses on the south side of the street.

❖ **Roadways should not disrupt and create dangers for established single family neighborhoods**

As the land use section illustrates, single-family development within the combined NPA is not the predominant type of land use. Single-family neighborhoods have established themselves over the years in pockets and have gradually become surrounded by higher density development (both residential and non-residential) in addition to major roadways. As a result, several of the transportation recommendations aim to preserve these neighborhoods not only with respect to land use, but also in character and quality of life.

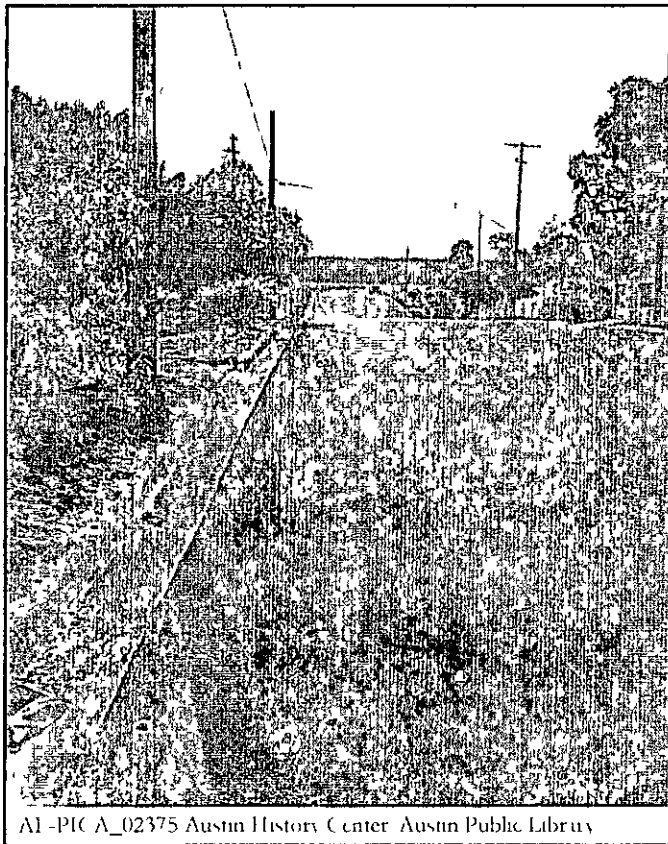
❖ **There should be more transportation options to move people to different parts of the area**

There are many amenities within the boundaries of the combined NPA that attract locals and non-locals alike. Major destinations include Town Lake, the Hike and Bike Trail, retail services along Riverside Drive and Oltorf Street, the Colorado River Park, the Daniel Ruiz Library, ACC Riverside Campus, etc. A desire of the participants in this planning process is to see more transportation options so that people can take advantage of these amenities. Residents and workers in the area would benefit greatly from improvements in pedestrian, bicycle and transit infrastructure and services.

Lastly, specific recommendations made towards realizing each of the transportation goals can be found in Section 3. Any land use recommendation not supported by the City can be found in Appendix A. Immediately following this introduction is a documentation of historical or background information with respect to the transportation network in this area and following that is a table of the CAMPO and AMATP Transportation Plan recommendations for the roadways within the combined NPA.

History/Background

As noted in the land use section, the road network developed over time, usually in tandem with adjacent residential or commercial development. While some roadways, such as Parker Lane, are relatively old, others such as Oltorf Street are relatively new.



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East Riverside Drive

Riverside Drive is one of the oldest roadways, not just in the combined Neighborhood Planning Area, but in the City of Austin. Land for its right-of-way was deeded to Travis County in 1886. For much of its history, Riverside Drive served as a means for transportation, rather than a destination of commerce in itself. In fact, according to maps prepared for the Travis County Commissioners Court in 1902, Riverside Drive extended from Lamar Blvd eastward all the way to what was then known as Bastrop Road (not to be confused with Bastrop Highway). Bastrop Road was located just east of the present day US Highway 183, which is

also known as Bastrop Highway. Later, Riverside Drive was extended to connect with State Highway 71, also known as Ben White Boulevard, and named in honor of "Uncle Ben" White who served from 1951-1967 on the Austin City Council. In addition to Riverside Drive's early connection with roadways to Bastrop and beyond, it later served as a major route to and from the Bergstrom Air Force Base (the current site for the Austin Bergstrom International Airport).

Used as a base to train pilots fighting in World War II, the base was renamed Bergstrom Army Air Field in 1943. During and especially after the end of the War, many military families moved to the Del Valle area around the base, thus increasing demand for transportation connections between the base area and

downtown Austin. In 1959, after completion of IH-35, additional right-of-way for Riverside Drive was deeded to the County to widen it east of Parker Lane.

Other major roads in the Planning Area, such as Burleson Road, Metcalfe Lane and Parker Lane, also predate most land development. Burleson Road (of which Metcalfe Lane was a part of prior to realignment), dates from 1925 when its right-of-way was deeded to the County. Several of these connected with roads south of State Highway 71 such as Burleson Road, Todd Lane, and Nuckols Crossing, which had existed to some degree in their current alignment since the end of the nineteenth century.

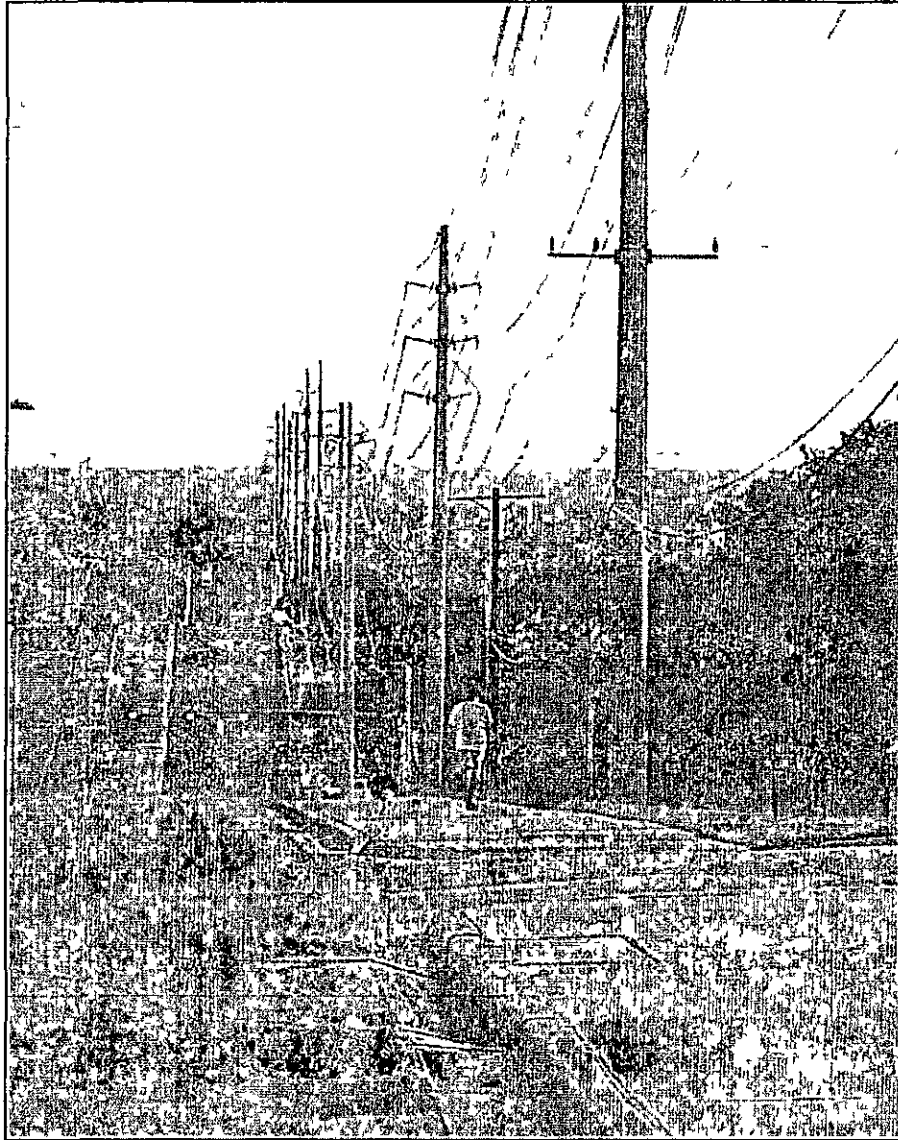
State Highway 71, the southern boundary of the Combined Neighborhood Planning Area, which in 1939 was described as extending from Bastrop via Smithville, La Grange, Columbus, El Campo, and Midfield to a point, was well-traveled and was extended to Austin by 1951. However, the origins of this highway are actually much earlier. Bastrop Highway was a "historical road" on the 1898-1902 roadway map adopted by the Commissioners Court of Travis County. It was improved by the City of Austin while in the City's jurisdiction and named after a Mayor for the City. In 1960, the City began construction on what would become the Ben White Boulevard and US Highway 183 interchange.

Interregional Highway Number 35, or IH-35 as it is commonly called, serves as the western boundary of the Combined Planning Area. The interstate highway system began in 1956, when the US Congress established the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways. Construction of IH-35 through Austin was among some of the first Interstate projects, and already by 1959 the Interstate extended from the International Boundary at Laredo to the Texas/Oklahoma State Line.

Montopolis Drive and Grove Boulevard, which serve as the eastern boundary of the Combined Planning Area, are relatively old (Montopolis Drive) and relatively new and incomplete (Grove Blvd). Montopolis Drive, deeded as right-of-way to the County in 1949, served as the primary entry point into Montopolis, a separate community established on the outskirts of Austin. Grove Boulevard was constructed in the 1980's and 1990's, when the underlying and adjacent property was already in the City's jurisdiction. Today, Grove Boulevard effectively ends at the Roy G. Guererro Colorado River Park. However, it was planned to eventually connect with Montopolis Drive in order to provide additional north-south connectivity. The extension of Grove Boulevard remains

East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan

in the adopted *Austin Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan* (AMATP 2025), the official Long Range Transportation Plan for the Austin Metropolitan Area



Pleasant Valley Road, looking north

Shortly before the beginning of this neighborhood planning process, Pleasant Valley Road was extended south of Oltorf Street (seen above at the stoplight). Later, a ten-foot wide shared-use path was constructed for pedestrians and bicyclists. The path extends to Burleson Road along a utility right-of-way.

CAMPO and AMATP Transportation Plans

There are two major organizations that plan roadways in Austin. The first is the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), created by federal mandate and charged with developing an integrated transportation plan for the regional area of Central Texas. Federally mandated metropolitan planning organizations exist all over the country and are expected to conduct exhaustive data analyses in preparation for their roadway and transportation plans. The CAMPO 2025 Plan serves as a guide for long-range planning for federally funded transportation projects and serves as a comprehensive transportation plan for the governmental jurisdictions within the CAMPO area. These include the Texas Department of Transportation, Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, nineteen municipalities, and all of Travis, Williamson, and Hays counties.

The Austin Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan (AMATP) is intended to guide arterial roadway network decisions for approximately the next twenty-five years. The AMATP does not mandate a schedule for roadway construction projects, but rather identifies a proposed future major roadway system. It uses the CAMPO 2025 Plan as its foundation and adds alternative recommendations and additional data where the AMATP planning team deems appropriate. City Council has adopted the AMATP and the City of Austin supports its implementation, although on occasion, the Council will amend the plan.

Table 9 CAMPO 2025 & 2030 and AMATP 2025 Transportation Plans

Roadway/Project	Segment/Location	Existing or Committed by 2005	Adopted AMATP 2025	Adopted CAMPO 2025	Recommended CAMPO 2030 (Feb 2005 Draft)
IH 35	Cesar Chavez - US 290 (W)	FWY 6	FWY 8/HOV	FWY 8/HOV	FWY 8/ML
SH 71 (E)	IH 35 (S) Pleasant Valley	MAD 6	FWY 6	Toll FWY 6	Toll FWY 6
	Pleasant Valley - Riverside	MAD 6	FWY 6	Toll FWY 6	Toll FWY 6
Burleson Rd	Oltorf Street - Hwy 71 (E)	MNR 2	Existing	Existing	MNR 2
Grove Blvd	US 183 (S) - Fairway St	MNR 0/4	Existing	Existing	MNR 0/4
	Fairway St - Montopolis	MAD 4	Existing	Existing	MAD 4
S. Lakeshore Blvd	Riverside Dr - Pleasant Valley	MNR 2	MNR 4	MNR 4	MNR 4
Montopolis Dr	US 183 (S) - SH 71 (E)	MAD 4	Existing	Existing	MAD 4
	SH 71 (E) - Burleson Rd	MAD 4	Existing	Existing	MAD 4
Oltorf St	IH 35 (S) - Pleasant Valley	MAU/MAD 4	Existing	Existing	MAU/MAD 4
	Pleasant Valley - Montopolis	MAD 4	Existing	Existing	MAD 4

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(Table 8 CAMPO and AMATP Plans continued)

Roadway/Project	Segment/Location	Existing or Committed by 2005	Adopted AMATP 2025	Adopted CAMPO 2025	Recommended CAMPO 2030 (Feb 2005 Draft)
Pleasant Valley/Old Lane	Cesar Chavez - Colorado River	MAU 4	Existing	Existing	MAU 4
	Colorado River - Riverside Dr	MAU 4	MAD 4	MAD 4	MAD 4
	Oltorf St - SH 71 (E)	-----	MAD 4	MAD 4	MAD 4
Riverside Dr	IH 35 (S) - Lakeshore Dr	MAD 6	MAD 8	MAD 8	MAD 6
	Lakeshore Dr - SH 71 (E)	MAD 6	MAD 8	MAD 8	MAD 6

Key to Roadway Classifications

FWY - Freeway

Toll FWY - Toll Freeway

MAD - Major Divided Arterial

MAU - Major Undivided Arterial

MNR - Minor Arterial

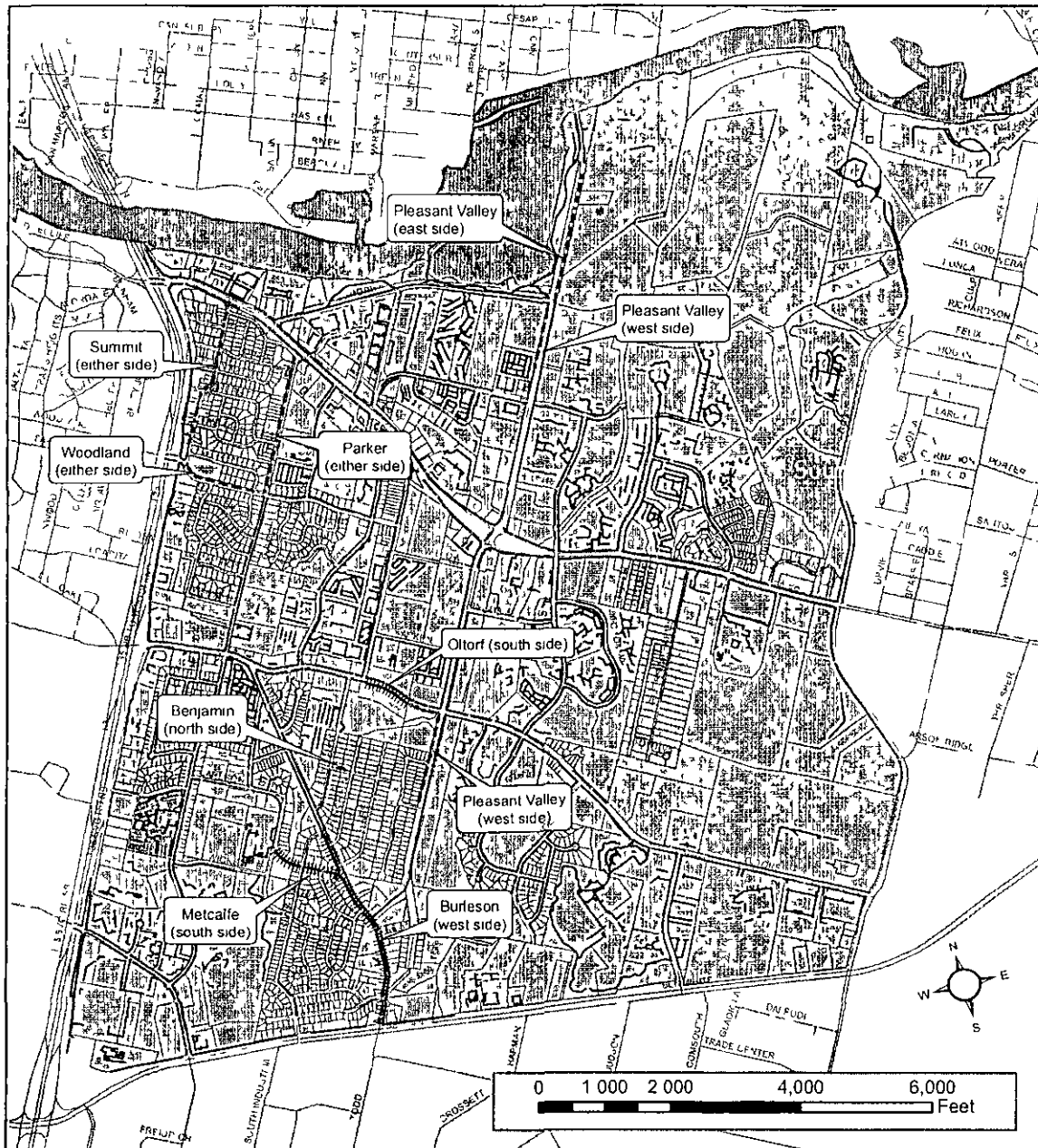
ML - Managed Lane

HOV - High Occupancy Vehicle

----- No Road Facility Present

The number after the roadway classification indicates the number of lanes. A "MAD" designates a roadway either divided by a raised median, flush center left turn lane, or a central drainage ditch. The choice of one or the other is to be made in the roadway design and construction process.

Map 6: Existing and Proposed Sidewalks



Proposed New Sidewalks and Major Repairs or Improvements

Legend

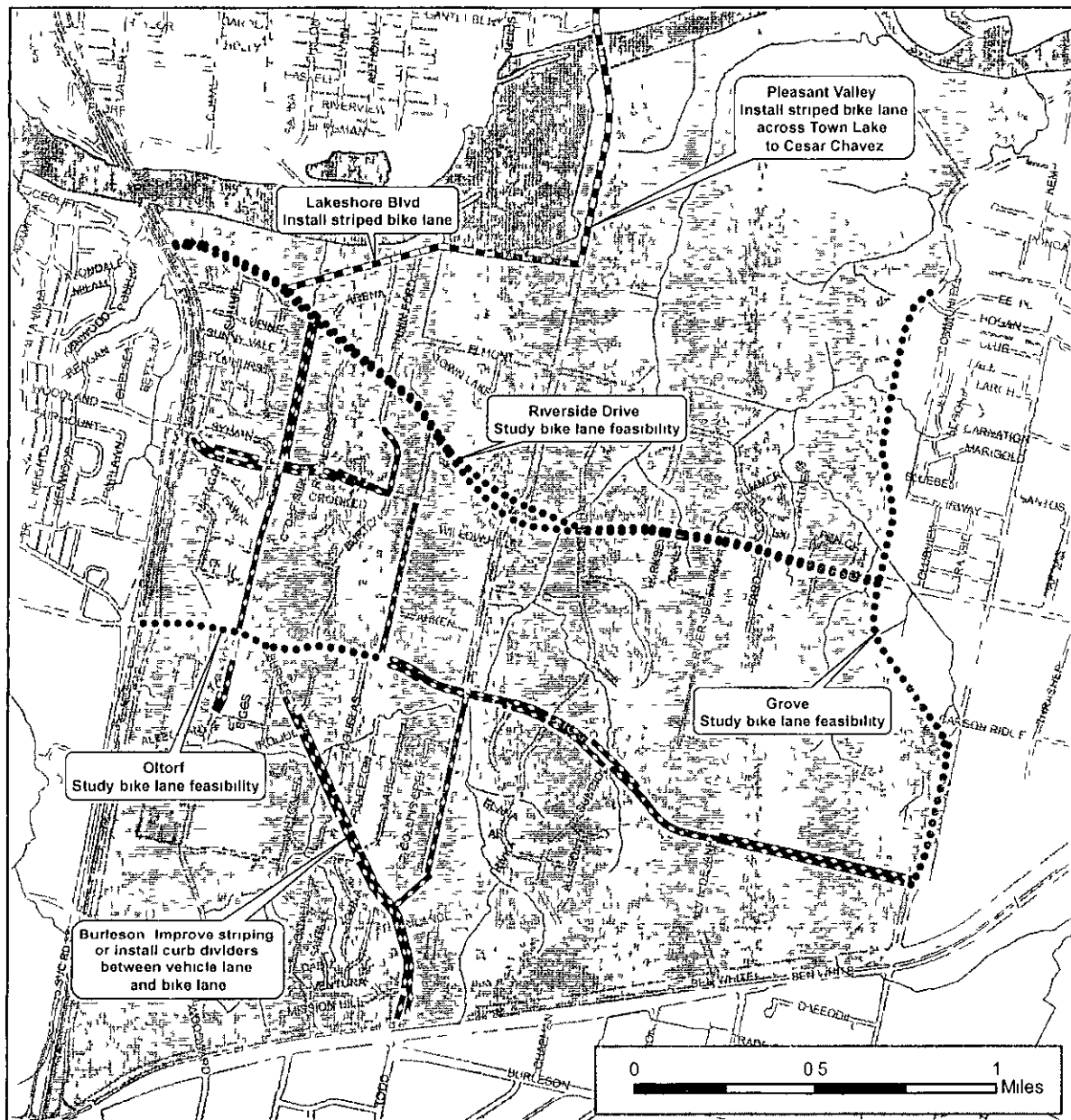
- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Proposed New Sidewalk | Street |
| Repair/Improvements Needed | Lake or Pond |
| Existing Sidewalk | Creek |



City of Austin
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Zoning Department

Revised 9/2005

Map 7: Existing and Proposed Bike Lanes

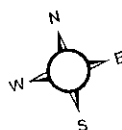


East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Planning Area Bike Lane Recommendations



City of Austin
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Legend

- Install Striped Bike Lane
- Study Bike Lane Feasibility
- Existing Striped Bike Lane or Shoulder
- Lake or Pond
- Creek

6. Parks, Trails, Open Space and the Natural Environment

Introduction

The East Riverside/Oltorf Neighborhood Planning process addresses not only the built environment but also the natural environment. Generally speaking, planning participants respect and enjoy the environmental resources and amenities within this part of Austin. There is much enthusiasm and energy to see existing green spaces preserved and a strong desire to augment them. With the understanding that this part of town is within the inner city, close to downtown and subject to high development pressure, planning participants would like a more reasonable balance between the built and natural environment. The natural environment should not be considered separate from urban life, rather, it should be integrated with urban living. The goals in this Plan that address park, trails, open space and the natural environment are

- **Protect and enhance the Town Lake Waterfront as well as creek areas and other natural amenities**
- **Preserve and enhance existing parks, the 18-hole Riverside Golf Course and other open spaces and create opportunities for additional public open space**

There were several prevalent themes that arose out of the Neighborhood Planning process related to this subject

- ❖ Creek areas should be protected from development so that their natural state is maintained for the enjoyment of residents and to mitigate flooding hazards and poor water quality
- ❖ Sensitive environmental features such as springs, wetlands and ponds should be identified and documented so that they can be protected from development
- ❖ The natural character of the waterfront environment should be preserved. These areas should also be accessible to the public as a natural amenity for all to enjoy
- ❖ Opportunities to create small parks (i.e. "pocket parks" or "neighborhood greens") within neighborhoods should be explored. There is much parkland within the boundaries of the combined NPA. However, much of this parkland is not within close distance of existing neighborhoods and is separated by Riverside Drive, a wide and very busy roadway

East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan

- ❖ Connections between existing park/open spaces should be created or improved, especially the gap in the Town Lake Trail. People should be able to safely access park space utilizing a variety of travel modes.
- ❖ A trail system should be created along Country Club Creek. The creek system is a major natural asset within this part of Austin and it should be preserved and made accessible to enjoy as a natural resource, similar to the Blunn Creek Trail just west of IH-35. Trails could create connections to different parts of the area where none currently exist and provide a much desired recreational amenity.
- ❖ Existing parks, primarily Mabel Davis Park and the Colorado River Park, should respond to the diverse recreational needs of the surrounding community.
- ❖ The Riverside Golf Course should be preserved as a golf course. The general desire of Neighborhood Planning participants is to see this property remain in its current state. Residents enjoy the open nature of the site and its historical significance; the Riverside Golf Course has become a fond neighbor to many. The owner, Austin Community College, is uncertain about its plans for this site since they are about to engage in a campus-wide master planning process to determine which, if any, of their existing campus facilities should be expanded.

The following pages document the history/background of the green/open spaces located within the Riverside, Parker Lane and Pleasant Valley Neighborhood Planning Areas. The next part introduces the Southeast Austin Trails and Greenways Alliance and explores the work that has been done by this group towards creating a system of trails along County Club Creek.

The Plan's recommendations that aim to achieve the goals listed above can be found in Section 3 of this plan. Any recommendation not supported by the City can be found in Appendix A. Supplemental environmental information related to this NPA can be found in Appendix C.

History/Background

The Longhorn Dam on The Colorado River

Town Lake, stretching from Tom Miller Dam at the west to Longhorn Dam at the east, is the youngest "constructed" lake on the Colorado River in Central Texas. Unlike the six dams constructed and operated by the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), Longhorn Dam was constructed, and is maintained, by the City of Austin. Also unique to Town Lake is that it is in the heart of Austin and nearly inseparable from the identity of Austin as an urban oasis within Texas, however, that was not always the case.



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Longhorn Dam

Even though the Longhorn Dam did not become a reality until the 1960's, planning for the low-water dam, as it was then called, and the resulting lake began at least by 1927, one year after Austin adopted its city manager form of government and about the same time Austin established its parks and playgrounds system. According to a 1932 report to the City Council, the purpose of the proposed dam was to create a lake in the City of Austin as a means of beautification of the river front and a possible resort for visitors to and the citizens of Austin (Helland, 1932). This report analyzed two possible

locations for the dam, one at Comal Street and the other at the East City Limit line (about 1.25 miles to the east of Comal), considerations included the impact to existing storm sewers, elevated water levels in creeks, and the number of acres which would be flooded. The project was determined feasible, with the proviso that it not cause damage to the Barton Springs pool, and recognition that it may benefit the Water and Light Plant. The cost of the dam, excluding landscaping and beautification, was estimated at anywhere from \$209,000 to \$248,000, depending on specific site location.

Chain of Highland Lakes and Dams

Buchanan Dam – Constructed from 1935 – 1937 primarily to store water and supply hydroelectricity – forms Lake Buchanan

Inks Dam – Constructed from 1936 – 1938 primarily in tandem with Buchanan, as it has the smallest hydroelectric power plant and no floodgates – forms Inks Lake

Wirtz Dam – constructed from 1949 to 1950 primarily to provide additional hydroelectric power and provides cooling water for LCRA's Ferguson Power Plant along Horseshoe Bay. The Dam and Lake were originally called Granite Shoals, the dam was renamed in 1952 for Alvin J. Wirtz who was instrumental in LCRA's creation and served as its first general counsel. The lake was renamed in 1965 for another advocate of LCRA, President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Starcke Dam – Constructed 1949 – 1951 for hydroelectricity – forms Lake Marble Falls. Originally named Marble Falls, the dam was renamed in 1962 for Max Starcke, LCRA's second general manager.

Mansfield Dam – Constructed from 1937 – 1941 – specifically designed to contain floodwaters in the lower Colorado River basin – forms Lake Travis. Originally known as the Marshall Ford Dam, it was renamed in 1941 for U.S. Rep. J.J. Mansfield, who assisted in the project's development. The Corps of Engineers, however, still refers to the structure as the Marshall Ford Dam.

Tom Miller Dam – Constructed from 1938 – 1940 to provide hydroelectricity and store water – forms Lake Austin. Constructed on top of the remains of two earlier structures, both called Austin Dam, built from 1890-1893 and 1909-1912, respectively. Massive floods destroyed both structures. The lake originally was called Lake McDonald. The final dam is named for an Austin Mayor, and is leased to the LCRA by the City of Austin until 2020.

(Source: Lower Colorado River Authority)

A few years later, in preparation of the 1936 Texas Centennial, it was decided that construction of the dam was necessary, not just for Centennial uses but for

the general benefit of the City and the Water & Light Department, a proposal to borrow \$250,000 for the purpose of building the low water dam and incidental expenses followed

Despite that call, the dam was not built by the time of the Texas Centennial. In 1938, Tom Miller, Mayor of Austin from 1933-49, 1955-61 (and for whom the Austin Dam was renamed after reconstruction due to flooding), lobbied for federal funds under a Public Works Administration matching-funds grant. According to a newspaper article that same year, the low-water dam proposal had been the subject of discussion for over two decades, the planning for this dam likely preceded the planning of the Chain of Highland Lakes and Dams (refer to previous page for information on the Highland Lakes and Dams). The proposal was considered ready for action in view of the expected early termination of negotiations for the completion of the Tom Miller Dam (Statesman, 1938). Mayor Miller declared that the proposed structure would give Austin "the most beautiful river front in the country" and would provide a "gateway to the chain of dams along the Colorado" (ibid).

The ultimate decision to construct the dam was made in 1956, although it was made without a firm timeline or specific location. Bonds totaling \$1,250,000 had been previously authorized for the construction of a low-water dam that would create a lake in the heart of the city and boost the city's power producing capacity. As for location, the proposed site was "half way" between the Interregional Highway and the Montopolis Bridge (Statesman, 1956).

The primary purpose of the dam had changed from one of beautification to one of utility, it was to guarantee a consistent water level for the municipal power plant's water intake. Designed in conjunction with a new power plant, the collapsible dam (so as not to impede flood waters), was to provide a small "town lake" needed to assure an adequate water supply for both the old and new power plants. The new power plant was scheduled to be online by the summer of 1960 so that Austin could meet its rapidly increasing energy demands and not have to buy electricity elsewhere. In addition to impounding water for the Holly and Seaholm power plants, the 506-foot long dam also provided water for the renamed Thomas C. Green Water Treatment Plant, which originally began operations in 1925.

Today, many anglers, especially fly fishermen, enjoy the stretch of river below Longhorn Dam where long-rodders catch largemouth bass, bluegills and Guadalupe bass. In addition, the water released at the dam has been rated as

Class I - II by American Whitewater and is popular among members of the Austin Paddling Club

Why is it named the "Longhorn Dam"?

The name Longhorn Dam is reminiscent of the cattle drives that used to navigate the low-water crossing at this site. This crossing was once an essential link in the Chisholm Trail, a route that took longhorn cattle to market from some ranches at least twenty-five miles south of Austin to Kansas, and then brought market goods back. In *The Longhorn Crossing*, author Walter E. Long describes why this crossing was preferred over others:

The East Austin crossing was the favorite one since the water was spread over a rather even rock floor. There were no dangerous holes and no quicksand. The letters of old trail drivers indicate that they had less trouble crossing the Colorado than any other major river on their route. Even floods lasted only a short time since this semi-mountainous river had a quick run-off.

Interestingly enough, the first longhorn crossing at the site, in 1867, resulted in a stampede. Apparently, when the first large herds of cattle came in sight of the white outcropping of limestone with the sun shining on the water, the cattle stampeded. Although it took several hours to gather the cattle, this stampede and the drive (which continued) helped establish Austin's importance as it specified a crossing which came to be known as the Longhorn Crossing.

Town Lake Metropolitan Park

This collection of connected parks along both the north and south banks of Town Lake, including Auditorium Shores, Butler Shores, Festival Beach, Holly Shores, Lakeshore, Lamar Beach, Longhorn Shores, Norwood Tract, Shoal Beach, and Waller Beach, totals over five-hundred (508.89) acres. Lakeshore and Longhorn Shores, at 14.03 and 10.93 acres respectively, flank the south side of Town Lake and are within the Combined Neighborhood Planning Area. Perhaps best known for its 10.1 miles of graveled hike-and-bike trails, which are popular with joggers, walkers, bicyclists, and dog-walkers, the Park also includes picnic tables and pavilions, baseball, softball, and soccer fields, playgrounds, fishing piers and boat ramps, and, of course, restroom and parking facilities throughout.

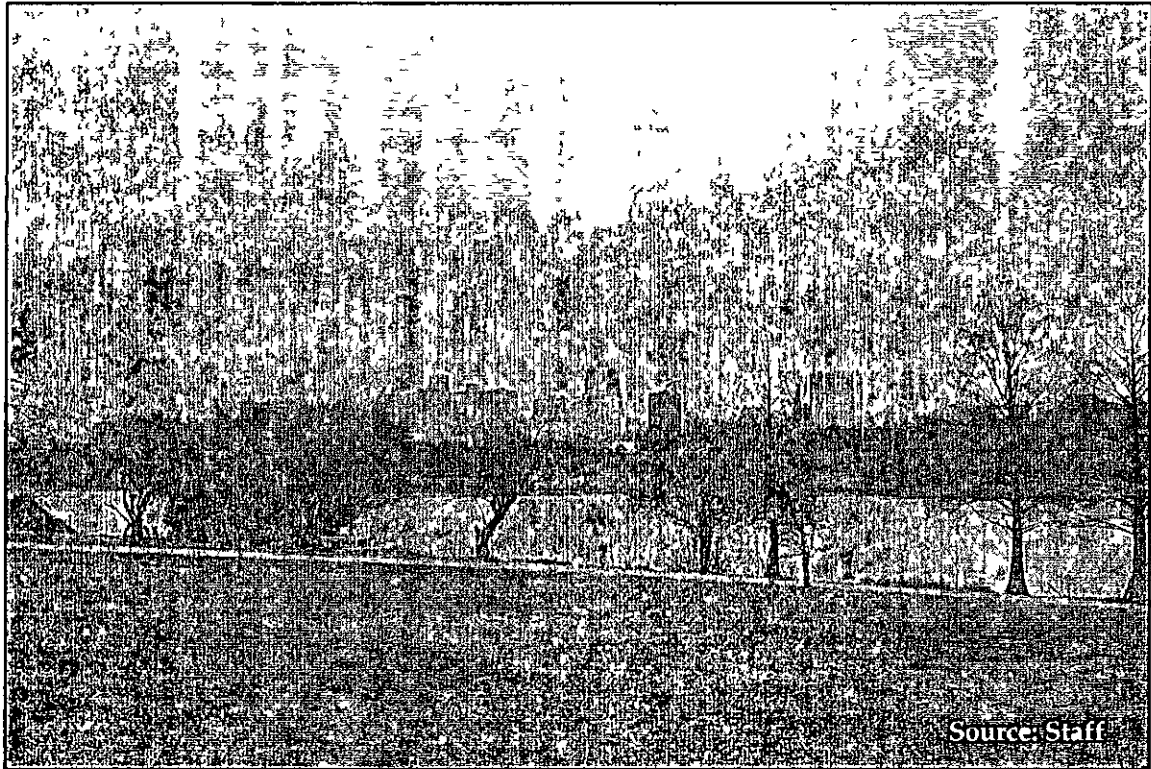


A segment of the Town Lake Hike and Bike Trail

The system of trails and the flowering trees along Town Lake can be thought of as a lasting legacy from Ladybird Johnson Development of the Park and establishment of its trails began in the late 1960s. In the mid 1970s, the former First Lady spearheaded a campaign known as the Town Lake Beautification Project, other people involved in the project include Roberta Crenshaw, who served as chair of the Parks Board.⁹ Austin voters approved \$2.5 million in bond money for the 1975-1977 capital improvement project.

Additional picnic areas, fishing points, trail development, a playscape, landscaping, restrooms and rest areas, and parking facilities, resulted from this Project. Also included were many trees planted along Town Lake, which included the following varieties: Bald Cypress, Chinese Tallow, Crepe Myrtle, Golden Rain, Live Oak, Pecan, Redbud, Spanish Oak, Weeping Willow, and Yaupon Holly. Already by the end of 1975, the Project had received state and national awards, including an outdoor recreation award from the National Trail Systems and Best Example of Texas Public Architecture by the Texas Society of Landscape Architects for the gazebo at Lou Neff Point.

⁹ Roberta Crenshaw was said to be the one - or one of the ones - who was primarily responsible for the Town Lake area being redone as green space and a park area per a 1997 interview with Mary Arnold conducted by David Todd as part of the Texas Legacy Project (Interview transcript available at <http://www.texaslegacy.org/m/transcripts/arnoldmarytxt.htm>)



Downtown Views from Hike and Bike Trail

To recognize the contribution from Ladybird Johnson, the City Council, in the late 1970s designated the network of trails along Town Lake and its main tributaries as the "Ladybird Johnson Trail System." A Trail and Waterway Development Fund was created by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to provide for the continuation of efforts started by the Town Lake Beautification Committee. As summarized by one writer over twenty years ago:

The creation of parkland along Town Lake has provided Austin with a central point of beauty and recreational facilities unsurpassed by other cities. Under the leadership of Lady Bird Johnson, Town Lake, a once unattractive disruption of urban geography, has been turned into an escape from urban monotony for the people of Austin.

From what had been an underdeveloped section of town referenced to as "the lower part," there has arisen, with the rebirth of central Austin, a desire among developers to utilize the asset provided by the lakes to create a new town from the land originally surveyed by Mr. Sandusky and Mr. Waller in 1839 (Harris, 1984).

Indeed, it could have turned out differently. As explained by the same author, when the Lake was formed it was an unpolished gem that provided opportunity for careful refinement and development. It was ignored, however, because of a

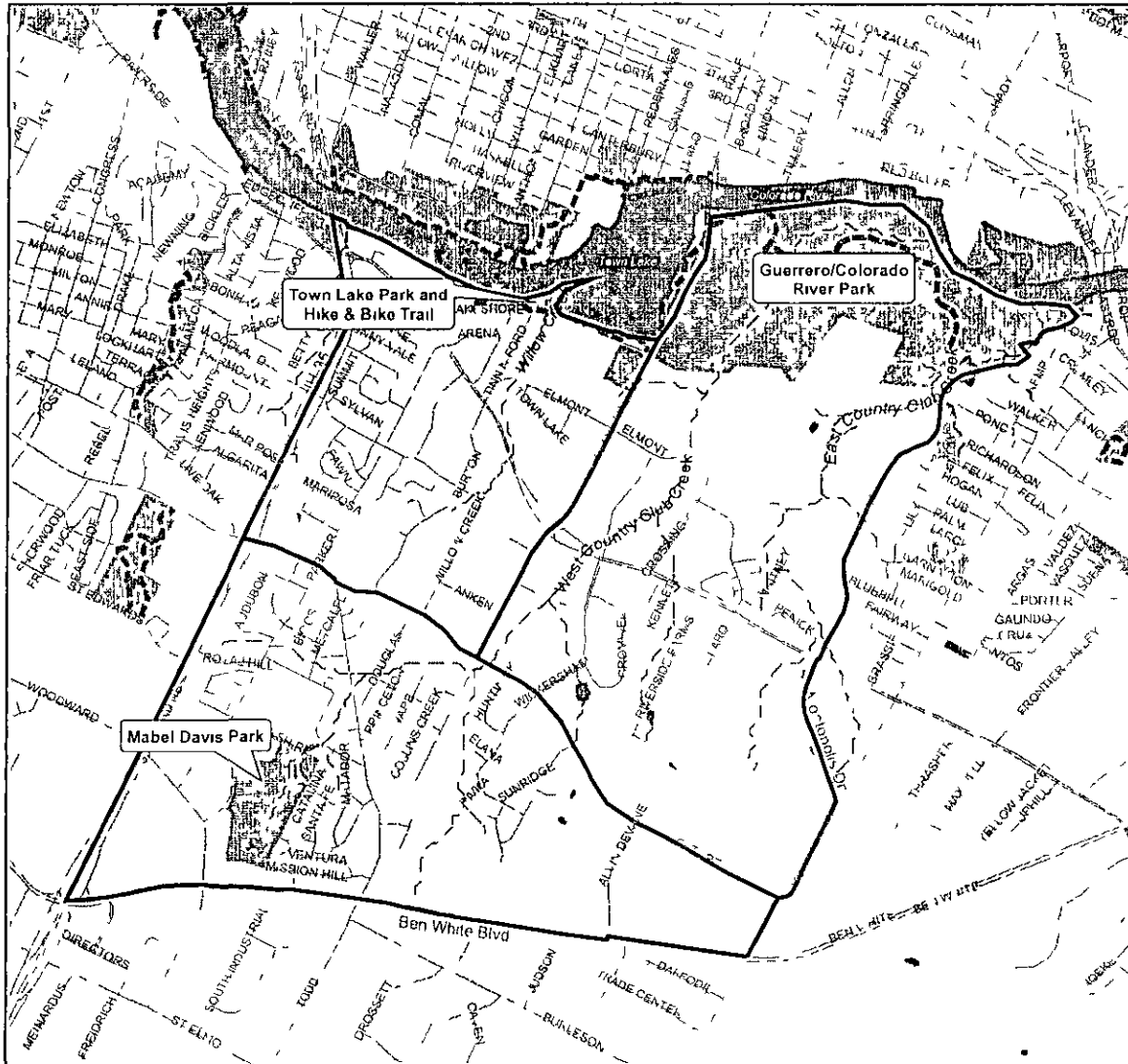
general lack of interest in the “lower end of town” among Austinites. Despite the new auditorium built on the south shore in 1959, little changed and the City neglected the water. The situation continually deteriorated to the point where citizens would refer to the area as Austin’s “backyard basin for refuse”, and some even suggested that it be filled in.

In 1968, a comprehensive master plan for Town Lake Development was approved by the City Council. Today, the result is an area that has changed from a “geographic barrier and overlooked industrial quagmire to an inner city unifier tying together north and south” (ibid).

In addition to the hike and bike trail’s popularity among Austinites noted above, the Lakeshore and Longhorn Shore Parks, along with the Colorado River Park, are popular spots among amateur ornithologists. According to data compiled by Texas Parks and Wildlife, the trees and vegetation along the lakefront provide habitat for migrant and wintering birds such as the yellow warbler (common during migration) and the ringed kingfisher (an occasional rarity). Wood ducks also nest in the vicinity, bringing their broods in late spring and early summer.

East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan

Map 8: Existing Parks and Trails



East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Planning Area
Existing Parks and Trails

Legend



Parkland



Lake or Pond

Creek

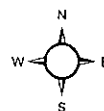


Existing Trail



Planning Area

0 1 000 2 000 4 000 Feet



City of Austin
Neighborhood Planning
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In addition, Town Lake also hosts thousands of over-wintering water birds, mostly American coots, lesser scaup, and double-crested cormorants. Occasionally, ospreys and common loons are reported. Western kingbirds and monk parakeets nest in and around ball fields at the Krieg Field complex. The Colorado River just below Longhorn Dam is also worth investigating if water is low – rarities found here have included the American dipper. The fields and thickets of the Colorado River Greenbelt are popular during migration, when one may see clay-colored sparrows, crested caracara and painted bunting.

Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Park

Formerly known as the Colorado River Park, the Park was renamed in August 2001 in honor of Mr. Roy G. Guerrero¹⁰. The first portion of Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Park was acquired in 1958. Adjacent properties were acquired by donation or purchase, with the final portion being acquired in 1994. In 1996 a plan was produced that identified a wish list of \$50 million in features, regrettably, that plan did not take into account flood plains and other natural features that would challenge the development of wish list items. Later, the Austin Parks Foundation conducted an analysis of the property and spent more than \$100,000 in private donations for master-planning the Park, which was completed in June 2000.

Today the Roy G. Guerrero Metropolitan Park is approximately 374 acres, slightly larger in size than Zilker Park. Of those acres, approximately 364 (97.3%) are within the East Riverside/Oltorf Neighborhood Planning Area. The park lies adjacent to the Montopolis Youth Sports Complex and together, the parks contain five lighted baseball fields and eleven lighted softball fields. Improvements for the park include a multiple-purpose field and two miles of trails. In addition, there are also plans for other recreational opportunities such as picnic areas, nature trails, a celebration area, an outdoor special events area.

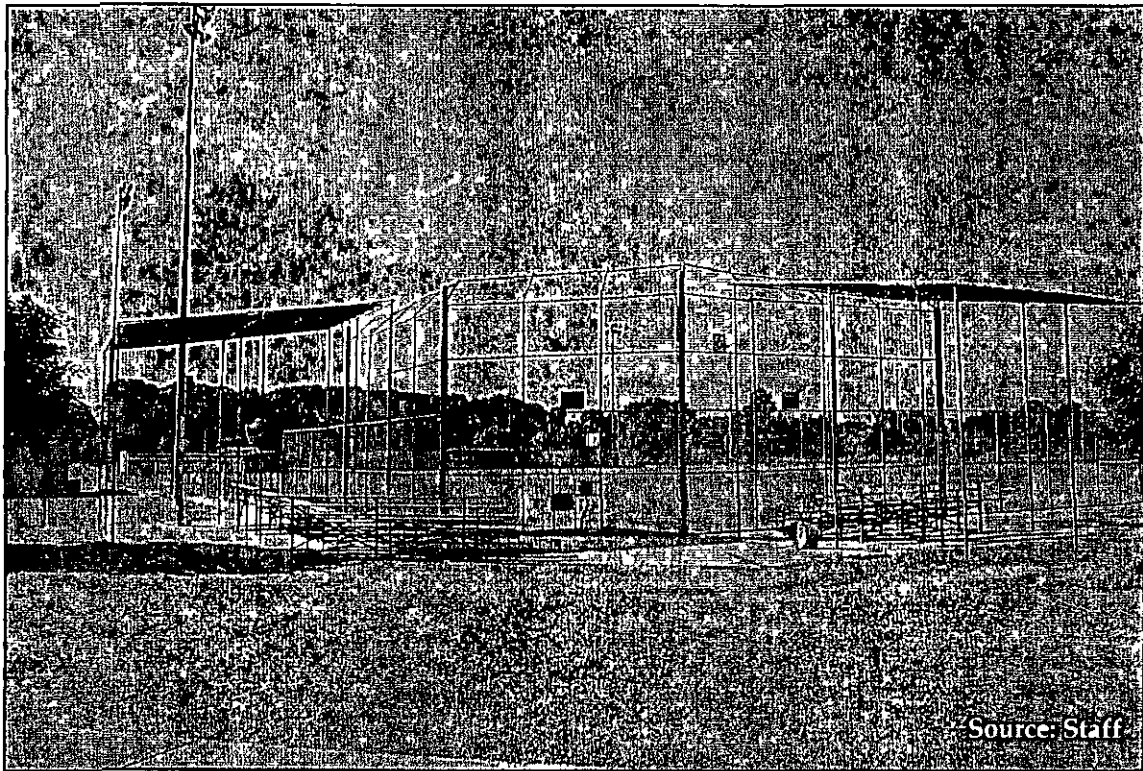
¹⁰ According to information provided by the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) prior to the dedication ceremony, Roy G. Guerrero, also known as "Mr. G" – as in Giant – and "Mr. Recreation," spent thirty-four years with PARC. He started as an activity leader in east Austin, and worked his way up to deputy director. During his tenure, he remained active in many community organizations – always finding new ways to inspire youth to become better adults, encouraging them to give back to their community. He is one of the founders of the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation, is past president of the Texas Recreation and Park Society, has served on several boards, and has received numerous community awards.

and a pavilion. All improvements are part of a larger capital improvement project funded by the 1998 bond election.

Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Park Chronology

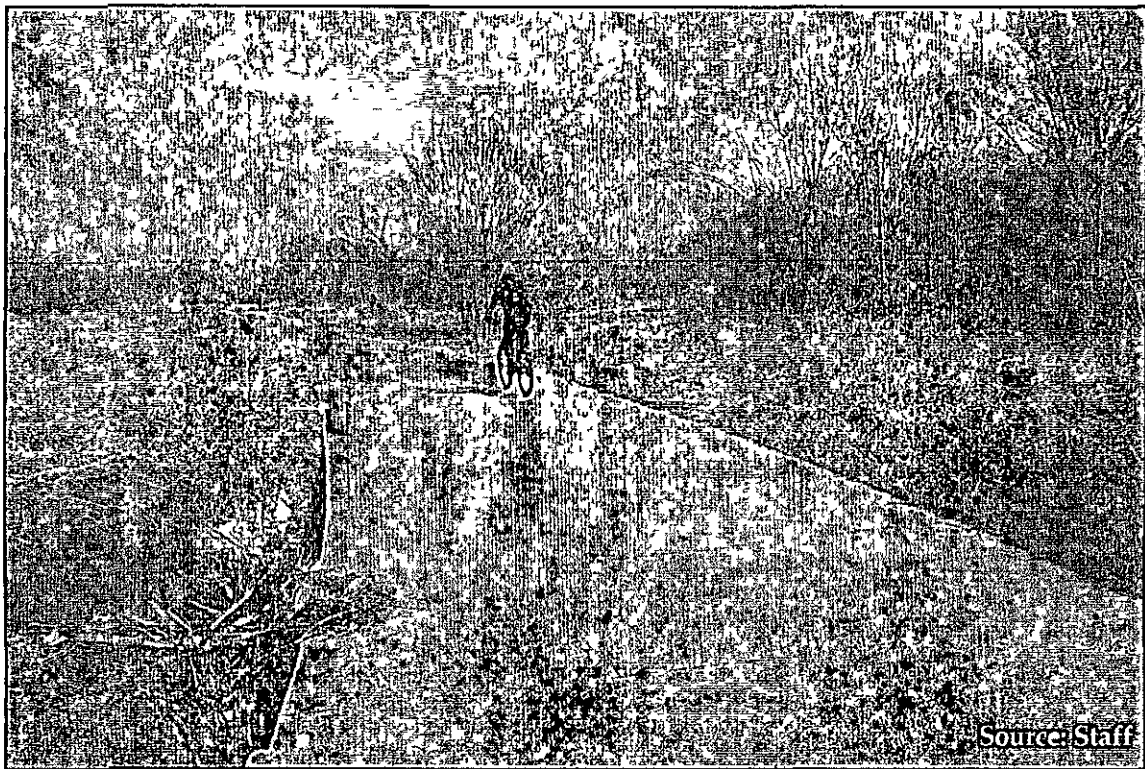
- 1958 – Acquired 63 acres along Pleasant Valley Road near Longhorn dam, which were later developed into the Krieg Field Sports Complex
- 1977 – Roberta Crenshaw, local parks advocate, donates 20 acres along the Colorado River
- 1980 – Colorado River land acquisition bond passed for \$300,000
- 1980 – Acquired 31 acres along the Colorado River near the Montopolis Bridge
- 1985 – Colorado River Park bond passed for \$3,180,000
- 1986 – Acquired 26 acres in order to expand parkland along the Colorado River
- Late – Adjacent College Park subdivision development fails. The property
- 1980's – passes through a Savings and Loan failure to the federal Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC)
- 1992 – Montopolis Sports Complex bond passes for \$2,950,000. The neighborhood chooses the Colorado River Park as the preferred location for the complex
- 1993 – The Trust for Public Land buys the College Park subdivision from the RTC. The Trust agrees to sell the land to Austin on a lease/purchase plan
- 1996 – The Colorado River Park planning committee produces a vision statement for the Park, a conceptual plan, and preliminary cost estimates for park development
- 1997 – The City completes the acquisition of the Park and takes final ownership from the Trust for Public Land. The acquisition adds another 223 acres of land to the park
- 1998 – Colorado River Park bond passes for \$10,000,000 to complete Phase I of the park
- 1999 – The Austin Parks Foundation hires Hargreaves Associates from California to prepare a Master Plan for the Colorado River Park
- 2000 – Master Plan approved
- 2001 – Colorado River Park renamed in honor of Roy G. Guerrero

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Source: Staff

Krieg Softball Fields located at the Roy G Guerrero Colorado River Park



Source: Staff

Cyclist on Hike and Bike Trail

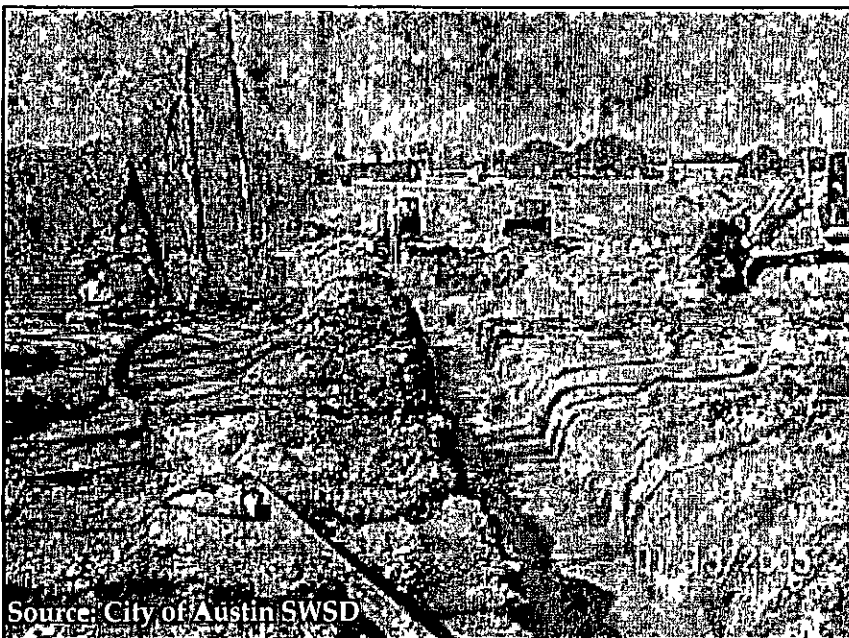
Mabel Davis Park

Mabel Davis Park, a municipal park of just over fifty (50) acres, was acquired by the City over three decades ago, in 1974. Named for Mrs. Alden (Mabel) Davis, who helped organize the Austin Area Garden Center and served as the Center's first President, it was developed in the late 1970's and opened in 1979. Features of the park include a swimming pool, picnic pavilion, two basketball courts, one softball field, one multiple-purpose field and a one-quarter mile nature trail.

Unfortunately, natural areas in the park are currently closed. Part of the park is located over a portion of an old landfill that was operated from 1944 to 1955. In March 2000, while preparing to do maintenance work on the landfill, the City discovered elevated levels of lead contained in old battery casings and nearby soils in relatively inaccessible areas of the park. Additional fieldwork uncovered elevated levels of a number of pesticides in several areas. Although no contaminants were found in surface water or groundwater and no pesticides or lead were found in the playscape area, the park was closed in May 2000 for remediation, except for the pool.

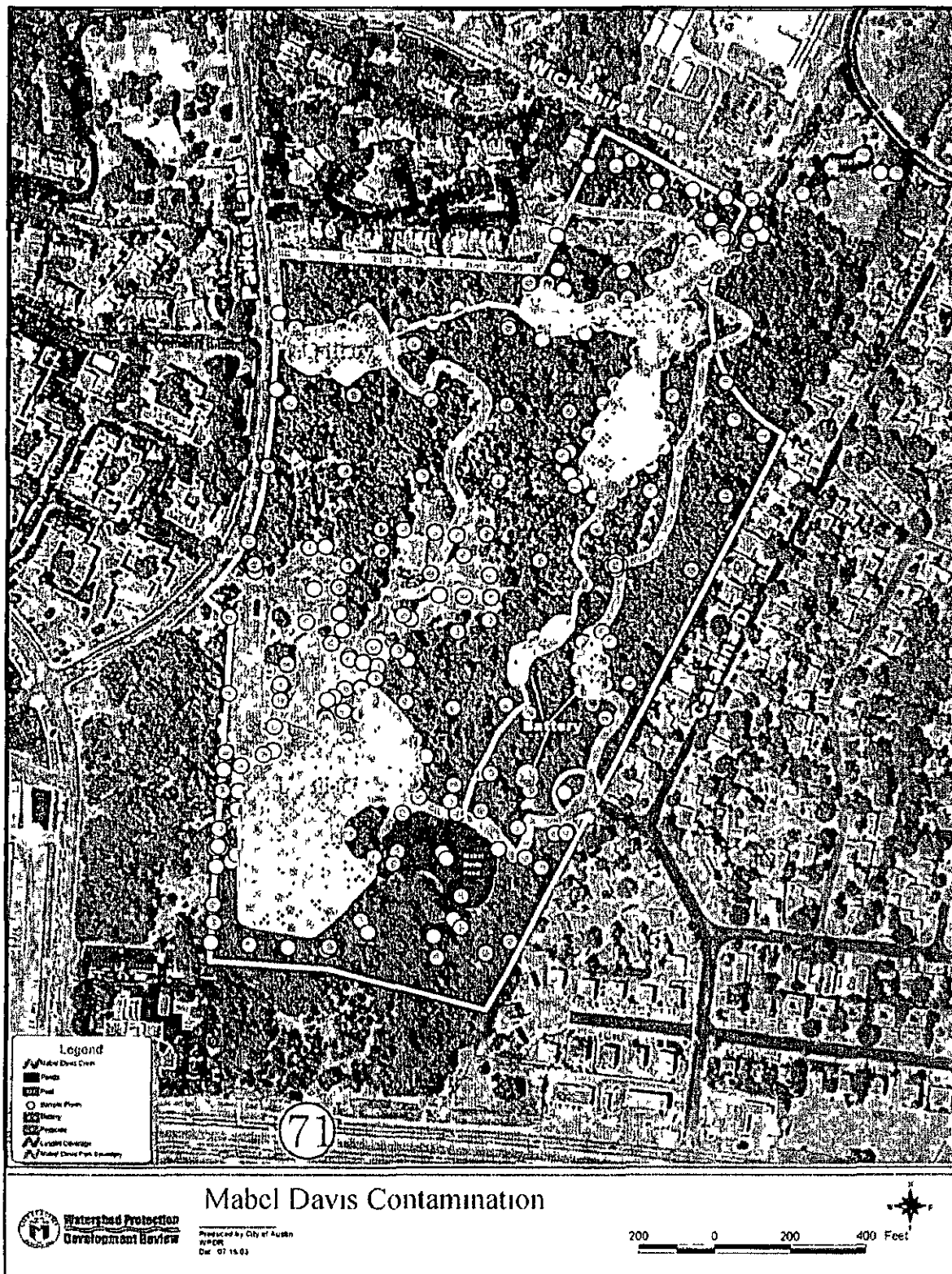
Components of the remediation project include:

- Remove lead-contaminated soil, cap or remove pesticide-contaminated soils, remove contaminated sediment from Newell Pond
- Rebuild and restore headwaters of Country Club Creek over landfill
- Stop groundwater filtering through landfill and into creek
- Cover exposed waste and stabilize landfill erosion
- Rebuild pond dam and install 2 bridges over creek
- Replace and upgrade an existing wastewater line



A clay slurry being placed into a trench approximately two feet wide, thirty feet deep and three hundred feet long through the pond dam. This "cutoff wall" will prevent water from the pond from migrating into the landfill and then coming back out into the creek as leachate.

Remediation project at Mabel Davis Park



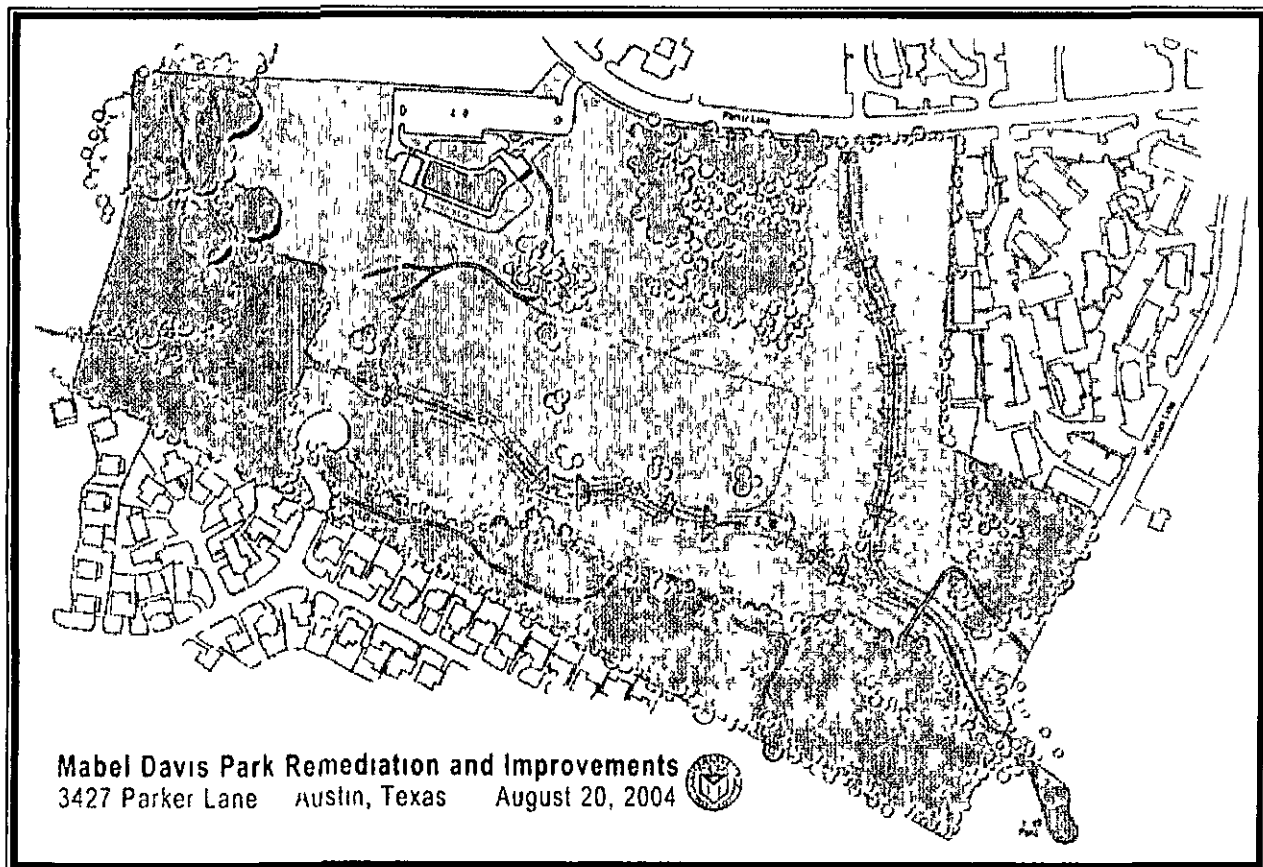
The mediation project is managed by the City's Public Works, Solid Waste Services, and Watershed Protection and Development Review Departments, while the actual contract work is being done by private party. Funding for the

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\$8-\$9 million project is provided primarily from City issued bonds, although approximately \$500 thousand was provided by the City's Brownfields program

The City has been working closely with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) on the cleanup. As noted, the remediation involves removing contaminated soil in some areas and "capping" contaminated soil in other areas. The City will inspect the cap and landfill on a yearly basis. In addition to the work being done to address soil contamination, the project includes fixing problems associated with the landfill, such as rebuilding the creek (which has caused erosion into the landfill exposing landfill waste), regrading and capping the top of the landfill, rebuilding the pond dam, and installing a leachate collection system. In addition, the City Council recently approved \$390,000 for the design and construction of a skateboard facility. All work is scheduled for completion by the end of summer, with the park reopening in October 2005. Once remediation is complete, approximately 20 acres of the park that were previously inaccessible due to trees and underbrush will be available for use by park visitors. New open areas will be planted with native grasses, wildflowers, and Bermuda grass.

Artist's Rendering of Mabel Davis Park after Remediation and Improvements



Certain areas of the park (such as that above the landfill and under the pesticide cap) will have restrictions on excavation and foundations for structures, so as not to disturb the clay cap. Most areas, however, will have no other restrictions on use.

The Riverside Golf Course

The Riverside Golf course is an 18-hole par-71 golf course nestled into the southern portion of the Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Park, west of Grove Boulevard. Currently owned by Austin Community College who leases out the golf course management, the course was originally developed and used by the Austin Country Club.



Riverside Golf Course

History of the Austin Country Club and Harvey Penick

The Austin Country Club was established in 1899 by Lewis Hancock, mayor of the City of Austin. The Club built, owned and used what is now known as the Riverside Golf Course from 1950 to 1984, before they relocated to Davenport Ranch (Trimble, 1999).¹¹ Prior to their tenure at Riverside, the Austin Country Club could be found at 811 E. 41st Street, now known as the Hancock Golf

¹¹ Originally chartered as Austin Golf Club, the name changed to Austin Country Club in 1905, it later changed to Country Club of Austin and then back to Austin Country Club.

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Course Harvey Penick started his golf career at the Hancock location at the age of eight, when he became a caddy for the Austin County Club, by age thirteen he was assistant pro and was elevated to head professional in 1923 upon graduation from high school ¹² He retained that title for the next forty-eight years

In 1949, the Austin Country Club determined that they needed more space, and decided to move to the Grove Boulevard location, selling the Hancock Golf Course to the City of Austin Harvey Penick and the Board of Directors of the Austin Country Club selected Perry Maxwell, the preeminent golf architect of the classical period of golf architecture (1890 – 1941), to design and build the Grove Boulevard golf course Perry Maxwell, working with his son, J Press Maxwell, and Harvey Penick completed the course construction in two years (1948-1949)



Riverside Golf Course

Perry Maxwell golf courses are revered by golfers and have been repeatedly used by the PGA for major golf tournaments In 2002, Perry Maxwell's Southern Hills Country Club (Tulsa, Oklahoma – completed 1935) hosted the US Open In July 2006, another Perry Maxwell masterpiece, Prairie Dunes Country Club (Hutchinson, Kansas – completed 1937) was the site of the Seniors Open Maxwell's Southern Hills and Prairie Dunes golf courses have hosted more major

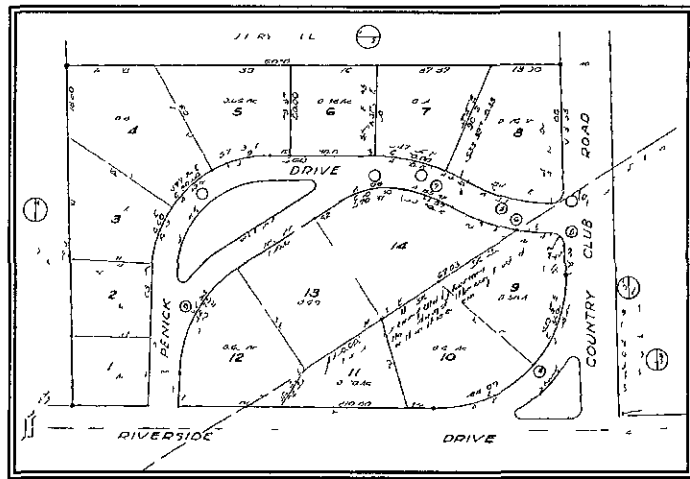
¹² Information provided by World Golf Hall of Fame <http://www.wgahof.com/hof/penick.html>

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tournaments (US Opens and PGA Championships) than any other golf course with one notable exception. The Masters is played annually at Augusta National Golf Club, a course Maxwell also co-designed, built (completed 1934), and then prepared for every successive Masters until his death in 1952. During that 18-year period, Maxwell became known as the "Open Doctor," because he was also the first golf architect given the honor and responsibility of preparing the course selected for the US Open each year.

Perry Maxwell was a "minimalist," known for his ability to work with the land. He and Harney Penick spent most of 1946 and 1947 looking for the best possible site for the new Austin Country Club. They had two criteria: soil and water. The Grove Boulevard site provided the very best of both, well-draining sandy loam soil and a highly productive water well.

When the Austin Country Club relocated to the Grove Blvd. site, so did Harvey Penick. He and his wife Helen subdivided a 10.8-acre parcel just south of the golf course into fourteen lots known as Penick Place. Throughout his 70-year career at the Austin Country Club, and his thirty-two years of coaching the University of Texas Golf Team, Penick compiled a notebook of things he had seen and learned about some of the great golfers he taught. His observations were ultimately published in 1992 as *Harvey Penick's Little Red Book: Lessons and Teachings from a Lifetime in Golf*, the book remained on the New York Times "Bestseller List" for over fifty-two weeks.



Penick Place Subdivision Plat

In its glory days as home to the Austin Country Club, the Grove Blvd. course saw "scores of champions—both amateur and professional as they made their way around the storied links, many to hone their craft at the hand of the late great teaching professional, Harvey Penick.

Two time Masters champion Ben Crenshaw whetted his putting touch on the original Maxwell greens, 16 of which—plus the original putting green—are still being enjoyed by golfers today

Austin's Tom Kite, the 1992 US Open champion, developed his world class swing mechanics as a junior player, by hitting tens of thousands of shots at the ACC practice range—now a parking lot adjacent to the No. 3 tee. Even LPGA Hall of Famer Sandra Haynie—an Austin girl—had her breakout tournament as a professional at Riverside in the 1962 Austin Civitan Open. Haynie triumphed victorious—in playoff against Mickey Wright—the LPGA legend some consider the greatest female player in history

Before his death in the service of his country, Air Force Lt. Morris Williams Jr., played many rounds at the old country club. Williams was a golfing phenom before the world ever heard of names like Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. Penick himself always included Williams in the same swath of greatness as Crenshaw and Kite. And today, the US Air Force Golf Championship trophy is named in Williams' honor, as is Austin's own Morris Williams Golf Course

Major champions Byron Nelson, Jimmy Demaret and Don January toured the Riverside course on occasion, as did legendary hustlers Titanic Thompson and George Low. Many of the past and current Texan members on the Champions Tour have played the ACC/Riverside course at one time or another—such as Frank Conner of San Antonio, Austinites Randy Petri and Terry Dill, Rik Massengale, Billy Maxwell and the University of Texas players of the 50's, 60's, 70's and early 80's, all familiar faces on the fairways of old Riverside

Even the amateurs who played the Maxwell design had games that resonated far and wide. Crenshaw often told folks he only wanted a putting stroke as fluid as amateur Jimmy Connolly—an Austin city and Texas state champion, whom Crenshaw watched on the Riverside putting green as a little boy. Other amateur champions—too many to mention all—saw their games blossom at the ACC/Riverside tract. Roane Puett, George McCall, Sonny Rhodes, Bill Gainer, Chuck Munson, Richard Buratti, and the late Billy Penn, all polished their games to scratch handicaps at the East Austin layout

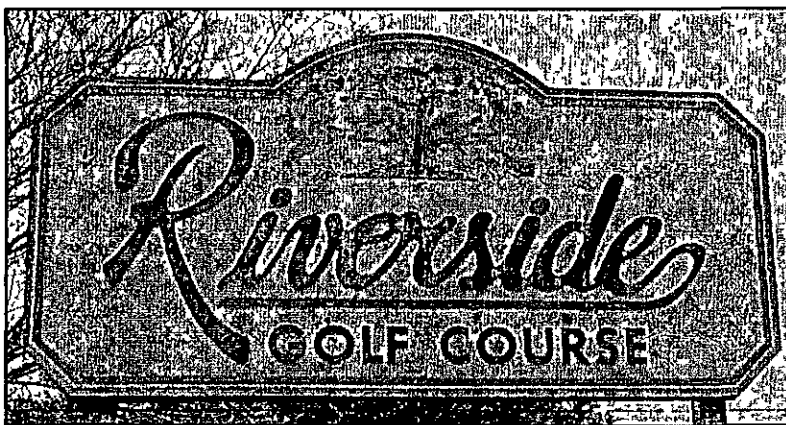
Among LPGA professionals, few pilgrimages were made more often than to the Austin Country Club and no teacher of the game was more sought after than Penick. LPGA Hall of Famer Betsy Rawls, Kathy Whitworth and Sandra Palmer all returned to Austin on a regular basis to the Maxwell course for a dose of swing remedy from Penick. Hall of Famer Judy Rankin, of Midland, an ABC golf analyst and US Solheim Cup captain, would play the course when she came to Austin. Austin's own Barbara Puett, now an accomplished author and

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renowned teaching pro in her own right, learned most all her teaching methods based on what Penick taught her at old Riverside ¹³

The 18-hole golf course was built primarily with native plant materials but some plant materials such as the initial bent grass greens were introduced. The facilities included maintenance and storage facilities, golf cart storage, driving range and golf professional shop. In addition the Austin Country Club offered swimming, tennis, fine dining and a place for civic activities and good fellowship.

By the late Seventies, the Austin Country Club was once again experiencing growing pains and began to consider relocation. In 1977, the Parks and Recreation Department was contacted by the Austin Country Club to see if the City was interested in acquiring the facilities. Both the continuation of the current use as a golf course or converting the grounds and facilities for metropolitan park usage were determined to be viable options ¹⁴.



However, PARD thought that the next metropolitan park should be located in the far south based on a projected growth pattern along a north-south corridor. Additionally, there was no indication of a significant growth

pattern toward the Bergstrom/Del Valle area, which would include a large portion of the area to be served by the site. Existing neighborhood and district parks were thought adequate to meet the needs of the area. Future facilities, such as Yates Park, additional development of the Pleasant Valley Park as a sports area, and the extension of the greenbelt along the Colorado River, were seen to be more than adequate to meet the projected needs of the area.

As for additional golf courses, the next golf course should be located north of Highway 183, in accordance with a previous 1974 PARD initiated "Golf Study."

¹³ Information provided by Del Lemon, taken from *Perry Maxwell and Harvey Penick and the Riverside Golf Course: A Brief History* (2005).

¹⁴ Information on the City's feasibility study is drawn from *Austin Country Club Acquisition Study*, authored by the Parks and Recreation Department, 1977.

The Hancock, Morris Williams and the Lion's Municipal Golf Courses (all maintained by PARD) offered publicly accessible 9-hole and 18-hole courses in close proximity to the central city

Given that acquisition of the property for conversion to a metropolitan park or public golf course was considered "supplemental," the cost to taxpayers was carefully scrutinized. The total projected costs for the conversion to a metropolitan park were calculated to be approximately \$6.2 million. In contrast, projected costs for the conversion to a public golf course and special use facility were estimated at \$4.4 million. With limited opportunities for revenue generation, both would operate at a loss, in addition to bond debt repayment. After reviewing current and proposed bond fund appropriations, the Parks and Recreation Department could not identify funds that would be available for this project.

ACC and the Riverside Golf Course

In the spring of 1984, Austin Community College, which by now was twelve years old and growing rapidly, acquired the 195-acre holdings of the Austin Country Club. Within a couple of years, they had rezoned the property, subdivided a portion of it, and initiated construction of their new Riverside Campus. The golf course was leased to a private third party for repairs, maintenance, and operation as a public golf course.



Riverside Golf Course with Views of Downtown

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Fifteen years after the City was first approached to acquire the property, the City decided to approach the owner about acquisition. In 2002, after significant acquisition and development of the Colorado River Park, the City made an offer to purchase the Riverside Golf Course from Austin Community College. After a cost/benefit analysis was completed, the ACC Board voted to retain the golf course but continue annual cost/benefit analyses, incorporating any changes in economic conditions, contract provisions, or significant changes that may affect continued ownership of the golf course into those analyses¹⁵

The course today is open to the public and memberships are available. The Bermuda grass course (greens, tees, and fairway) includes a putting and chipping green, offers lessons, rents clubs and carts, maintains a pro shop for equipment rental and repair, and serves breakfast and lunch at the Tin Cup Grill and Bar. In addition to the many large and mature trees found throughout the Riverside Golf Course and the four water hazards (that are both scenic and challenging to the golfers) are clear views of the downtown skyline.

Golfer Teeing Off



Source: Staff

¹⁵ The Texas School Performance Review filed by Austin Community College in November 2002 with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (available at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/tspr/acc/>) indicates there remained a 15-year lease and management contract on the golf course property. Given the remaining number and guaranteed amounts of payments generated by that contract, ACC determined a break-even selling point that was nearly triple the amount the COA had offered. That price was based on the presumption that ACC would hold the property for the remainder of the lease, and at the end of that lease, sell the property for its highest and best use (which according to an appraisal conducted for ACC, was as a mixed use development including a corporate campus, multifamily units and high density single family residential).